



Special Operations Forces Culture and Ethics

Comprehensive Review

To All Members of U.S. Special Operations Command,

The American people must trust those who protect them, including the special operations professionals in this Command. This trust is paramount and must never be compromised. Our culture—the very fabric of our beliefs and values—is deeply rooted in a history of honor, duty, and sacrifice. Our ethics—the principles that govern our behavior—are the foundation for values-based decision-making at home and when deployed in the most complex environments.

Recent incidents have called our culture and ethics into question and threaten the trust placed in us. As a result, I am initiating a comprehensive review of Special Operations Forces (SOF) culture and ethics. The review will gather insights and observations from across our force and will draw upon the unique perspectives of leaders from internal and external entities. In addition to an overall assessment of SOF culture and ethics, the review will focus on our recruitment, how we assess and select SOF professionals, how we grow leaders, how we educate and train our force to operate ethically with the same excellence with which we operate tactically, and how we address ethical failures when they occur.

The review will begin immediately and conclude in the fall of 2019. Specific details and schedules for unit visits across the USSOCOM enterprise will follow. I expect you to expend every effort to facilitate access and support the review team's efforts. Be open and candid in your feedback to the team. We will also publish the results and discuss them broadly. ***This is about making us better.***

Most importantly, recognize this review as an opportunity to strengthen our values and reinforce trust. We are the nation's special operations force and we remain intensely focused on accomplishing our mission while upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct—each and every day, as individuals and teams, at home and while in harm's way.

Richard D. Clarke
General, U.S. Army
Commander